

UN condemns deadly attack on peacekeepers in Central African Republic

10 May 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has strongly condemned an attack against a convoy of the UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic (CAR) that left four dead, one missing and 10 others evacuated.

“Attacks against United Nations peacekeepers may constitute a war crime,” Mr. Guterres [said](#) through his spokesperson yesterday on the attack perpetrated by suspected anti-Balaka elements against a convoy of the UN Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission ([MINUSCA](#)) on 8 May.

He called on the CAR authorities to investigate the attack “executed on the Rafai-Bangassou axis, in the country’s south east” in order to swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

Mr. Guterres offered his deepest condolences to the bereaved families and the Governments of the concerned troop contributing countries, and wished a swift recovery to the wounded.

The Secretary-General also reiterated his support to the actions of MINUSCA to protect civilians and stabilise the Central African Republic, and called “on all parties to heed President Faustin Archange Touadéra’s call to cease violence and work together towards the stability of the country.”

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013.

Also today, President of the UN General Assembly Peter Thomson arrived in CAR “to show solidarity with our United Nations people on the ground, particularly our peacekeepers.”

General Assembly President Peter Thomson along with National Assembly President Karim Meckassoua, Prime Minister Simplicie Sarandji and Head of MINUSCA Parfait Onanga-Anyanga visit wounded UN peacekeepers. Photos: Claude Adrien De Mun/MINUSCA

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Accompanied by the President of the National Assembly, Karim Meckassoua, the Prime Minister, Simplicie Sarandji and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, Mr. Thomson

went to MINUSCA's military hospital to [visit the bedside](#) of the UN peacekeepers that were wounded during the attack on their convoy.

According to the Mission, Mr. Thomson, on behalf of the Organization, took the opportunity to salute the dedication of peacekeepers engaged in all theatres of operation in the name of peace.

He went on to note that he is in CAR to spread the word on the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), "but I'm also here I think you will hear from me those strong messages on sustainable development and on the solidarity that we have with what the UN mission is here."

"The United Nations is here to help with the recovery of Central Africa, and I'm here to underline that role that the United Nations has here," he added.

[On World Migratory Bird Day, UN spotlights common destiny for wildlife and people](#)

10 May 2017 – A healthy planet for migratory birds means a healthy planet for people, as they share the habitats on the Earth, the heads of two United Nations-backed environmental treaties said, marking World Migratory Bird Day.

"If we commit ourselves to sustainable development and preserve the habitats that we share with migratory birds, both wildlife and people will benefit, because their future is our future," [said](#) the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species ([CMS](#)), Bradnee Chambers, in a press release.

Initiated in 2006, the [World Day](#) is celebrated each year to highlight the need for international cooperation to conserve migratory birds and their habitats for the benefit of mankind.

CMS and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement ([AEWA](#)) "two intergovernmental wildlife treaties administered by UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#))" organize the campaign in cooperation with a number of partners.

The theme this year is 'Their Future is Our Future "A Healthy Planet for Migratory Birds and People, which is closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), adopted by UN Member States in 2015 as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

Migratory birds face an increasing number of threats while travelling huge distances. Their intercontinental flyways include key stopover sites that are

essential for migratory birds to rest and refuel before continuing their journey. But land-reclamation and changes in global agricultural practices as well as poaching are causing habitat losses.

Habitat loss at stopover sites along the shores of the American Atlantic Coast have prompted a sharp 80 per cent population decline in the North American breeding populations of the Red Knot since 2000.

In the African Sahel, migratory waterbirds, such as the Garganey Duck, are hunted to ensure food security for people in the region.

Engaging local communities to practise sustainable hunting and in conserving waterbirds and their threatened wetland habitats is a core aspect of AEWA activities in Africa, said Executive Secretary of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) Jacques Trouvilliez.

[Amid spreading cholera outbreak, UN migration agency aids South Sudanese](#)

10 May 2017 – United Nations humanitarian workers are responding to a growing cholera outbreak in Ayod, the Greater Upper Nile region of South Sudan, one of multiple counties throughout the country where the disease has spread since June 2016.

The UN International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) said it deployed a rapid response team to Jonglei late last month, to support local health partners and try to contain the outbreak.

Conditions are [extremely difficult](#) for families in Jiech, said Carol Kipsang, an IOM health officer and nurse, referring to a town in Ayad County. More than 230 people are affected there.

We met one mother who was caring for her new born and her sister's child, after her sister died from cholera two weeks ago in her community. The young mother walked one hour to the IOM clinic to receive treatment for the children and seek nutritional support for her malnourished daughter.

The UN agency launched its response after 140 suspected cases of cholera were reported in Ayod during the first weeks of April, threatening the population of some 175,000 people.

Access to Ayod is difficult during the rainy season, and its proximity to the Nile River increases its vulnerability to outbreaks of water-borne diseases such as cholera, IOM said, noting also the ongoing crisis in Jonglei and the lack of health workers and medical supplies.

The majority of suspected cholera cases in Ayod come from communities living in cattle camps along the river.

Since the cholera outbreak was declared in June 2016, more than 7,200 cases of cholera have been reported, including 229 deaths, according to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the South Sudan Ministry of Health.

The disease is also reportedly spreading through swamp water, with millions of people displaced and moving through the swamps to avoid fighters.

WHO has provided response kits, medication and equipment for oral rehydration points and cholera treatment units.

[Buddha's message of compassion 'timeless' says UN chief on international day](#)

10 May 2017 – Observing the Day of Vesak, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called on the global community to draw inspiration from the journey of Lord Buddha and embrace his message of compassion.

“Born a sheltered prince, Shakyamuni went out into the world to confront and overcome human suffering,” said the Secretary-General in his [message](#) on the occasion.

“This message of compassion is timeless,” he said.

[Vesak, the Day of the Full Moon](#) in the month of May, is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world.

It was on the Day of Vesak two and a half millennia ago, in the year 623 B.C., that the Buddha was born. It was also on the Day of Vesak that the Buddha attained enlightenment, and it was on this Day that the Buddha in his eightieth year passed away.

Further in his message, Mr. Guterres also emphasized that in today's interconnected world, there can be “no peace as long as others are in peril, no security as long as others suffer deprivation [and] no sustainable future until all members of our human family enjoy their human rights.”

“On this Day of Vesak, let us celebrate the wisdom of Lord Buddha by taking action for others with a strong spirit of solidarity,” noted the UN chief, extending his wishes to all those celebrating the occasion.

In 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted a [resolution](#) in which it recognized the International Day to acknowledge the contribution that Buddhism, one of

the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity.

[EU an 'indispensable' UN partner, working for rules-based international order, Security Council told](#)

9 May 2017 – The European Union (EU) has become over the past 60 years of its existence, a “superpower for peace” focused not only on regional stability and security but also on sustainable development for all, which “explains why all our actions, all our initiatives are always taken in full coordination and partnership with the United Nations,” the EU’s senior most diplomat told the Security Council today.

“The European way is also the United Nations’ way. And we believe in the UN because we believe in the same principles, in the same values, and our communities are built upon the same fundamental ideals,” Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, told the Council today in her [annual briefing](#) on EU-UN cooperation.

Recalling that the European Union is marking its sixtieth anniversary “of choosing cooperation over confrontation,” she said the bloc has become not only the most successful peace project in the world, but also an indispensable partner to move beyond the current disorder, and to try to build together a more cooperative world order.

In recent months, some had thought that this anniversary would mark the decline of the European Union. “Our British friends have decided to leave us – which is very sad for all of us – but life goes on and so does the European Union,” Ms. Mogherini said, adding that since the UK Referendum last year, Europeans had recommitted to being “the strong and united power that our citizens and our partners need and deserve.”

The European Union is and will continue to be the reliable partner, she continued, stressing that “beyond our continent, we are the indispensable partner of a more cooperative, multilateral and peaceful world [...] we are becoming a more reliable partner for our neighbours and friends, starting with the UN and NATO.” She offered a series of examples to illustrate the EU’s commitment, especially in the Balkans and in Africa.

EU member States contribute nearly 40 per cent of the UN budget for peacekeeping operations. Through its voluntary contributions, the EU also covers half the budget of UN funds and agencies, such as the World Food Program ([WFP](#)), the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

So we will always return to this centre of gravity, this pivot of a rules-based international system. The European vision is the United Nations' vision

"So let me be very clear, and speak directly to our American friends. It is essential for us that we all keep investing in these UN agencies. They are as important to global peace and security as defence spending – and sometimes even more. And we, Europeans, consider this support to the UN system as a crucial investment in our own security," Ms. Mogherini stated.

She went on to praise the merits of a world order based on rules agreed upon and respected by all. It is for this reason that the European Union refuses to recognize the "illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. It is for this reason also that the perpetrators of the chemical gas attack in Syria will be held accountable," she said.

Ms. Mogherini said the greatest divide in today's world "is between those who believe that international politics are a zero-sum game, and those who work to build win-win solutions and common ground." She noted that the "European way" is in a constant search for win-win solutions to all international issues from climate change to peace and security, adding that the UN "represents a space where compromise can always prevail over confrontation."

"So we will always return to this centre of gravity, this pivot of a rules-based international system. The European vision is the United Nations' vision," said Ms. Mogherini, adding that whoever wants to invest in this system, will find in the European Union a partner and a friend, a reliable, constructive, cooperative partner.